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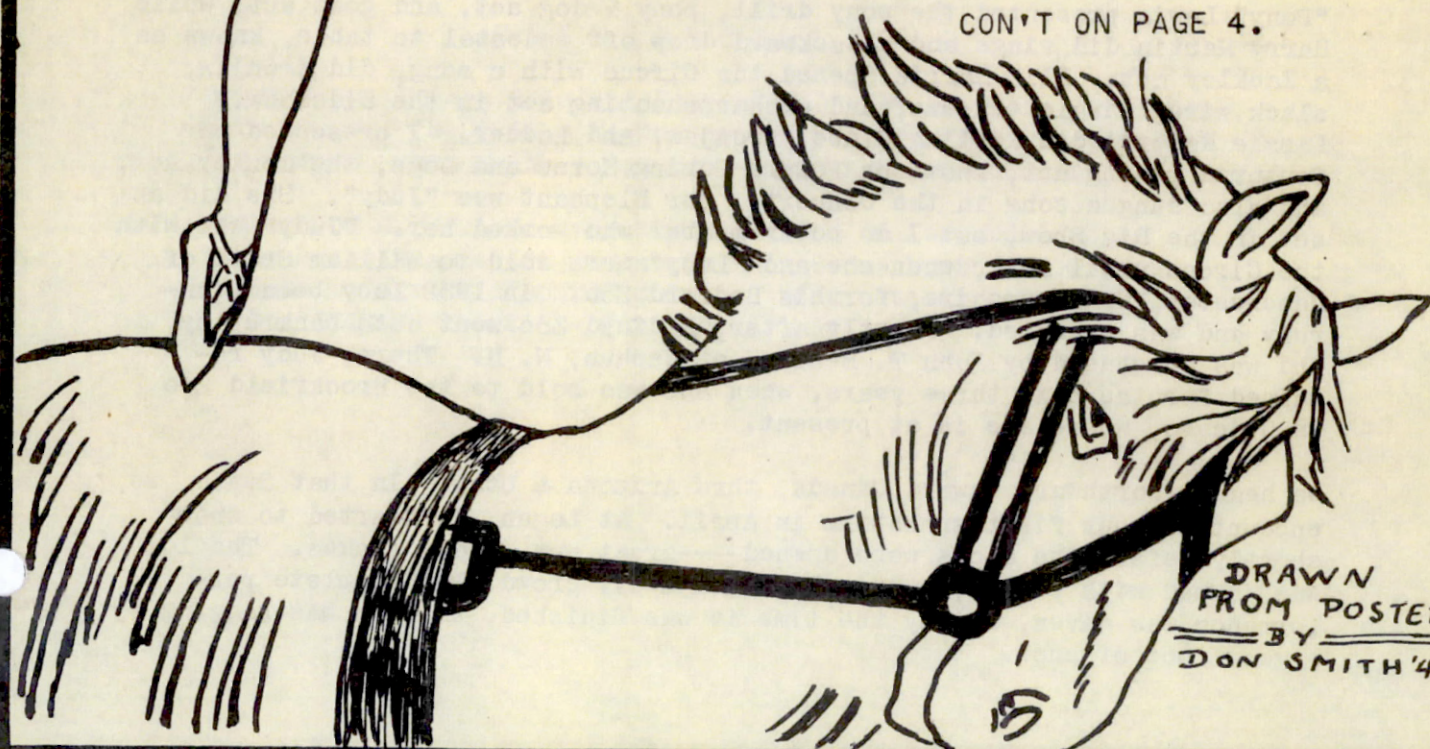
MAGAZINE AND REVIEW

"THE SHOW MUST GO ON"
— BY DON SMITH —

COLE BROS FIRE ISN'T NEWS ANYMORE, BUT WE THOUGHT C H S MEMBERS WOULD APPRECIATE A FIRST HAND ACCOUNT OF THE RUINS, AS VIEWED BY THE EDITOR, & WALTER PIETSCHMAN, SOME FEW WEEKS AGO.

ONLY THE OFFICE, AND ONE OTHER BUILDING REMAIN, OF THE SEVERAL LARGE STRUCTURES WHICH MADE UP THE WINTER QUARTERS. NEAT PILES OF SCARRED BRICK, & HERE AND THERE A COIL OF WIRE, OR BALLS OF MELTED GLASS, TELL MORE THAN WORDS, THE STORY OF THE SHOW WORLD'S MOST RECENT DISASTER. IN A REMOTE CORNER, ALMOST HIDDEN FROM VIEW, ARE TWO BLACKENED HEAPS, MEASURING POSSIBLY 3 FEET ACROSS. THESE, ACCORDING TO DR. PARTELLO WERE THE 2 ELEPHANTS WHICH WERE DESTROYED.

CON'T ON PAGE 4.



DRAWN
FROM POSTER
BY
DON SMITH '40.

MEMORIES OF COOPER BROS. RAILROAD CIRCUS...1917.

Written especially for SPEC by Mrs. Betty Leonard.

When our Editor, Don Smith, asked me to write an article, concerning one of the Circuses I have trouped with, my thoughts naturally turned to my first season on the road.

In February of 1917, we left our home in Corry, Penna. for Riverside, California and joined E. H. JONES Two Car R. R. Circus, bearing the title of COOPER BROS. We had a beautiful white Arabian horse, three white Eskimo Spitz dogs, and two highly trained Monkeys. Elmer had had special paper made for our posing acts, at the Erie Lithographing Co. at Erie, Pa.

E. H. had his show wintering at the Fairgrounds, in company with his brothers' J. Augustus Jones, COLE CIRCUS. Among some of the troupers were "Cheerful" Gardiner, then billed as the youngest Elephant Trainer in the World. Mable Stark and Louie Rolf were there until a few days before the opening, when they went to the Barnes Circus, wintering at Venice, California. Charles Gay then took the wild animals in charge. Charlie Barrie and Bessie Harvey were among others present.

California was a revelation to me, after the cold, and snow and ice we had just left in Pennsylvania. After three glorious weeks of both work and play, we opened in Yuma, Arizona, early in March, in a blinding dust storm. Never will I forget that first day with a Circus. I know that I ate my traditional peck of dust, that one day alone. We carried one Elephant, a Camel, a number of ponies, four work horses, our performing horse, a troupe of goats, dogs, and our trained monkeys. I do not remember the entire program, but can cite a few of the Performers, and their acts.

"Pony" Lewis presented the pony drill, pony & dog act, and goat act, while Harry Martin did rings and a backward drop off pedestal to table, known as a Jackley act. Ella Harris opened the Circus with a song, did ironjaw, slack wire, single trapeze, and a sharpshooting act in the Sideshow. Lizzie Roberts did Rolling Globe, ironjaw, and Ladder. I presented our featured posing act, known as Powers Posing Horse and Dogs, the Monkey Act, and also sung a song in the Concert. Our Elephant was "Judy". She did an act in the Big Show, but I do not remember who worked her. "Judy" was with the Circus until 1931, when she and "Lucy" were sold to William Scott of Manchester, New Hampshire, for his Bedford Zoo. In 1932 Lucy became unruly and was executed. Shortly after, Bedford Zoo went into bankruptcy, and was purchased by John T. Benson, of Nashua, N. H. There, Judy remained for the next three years, when she was sold to the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago, where she is at present.

We headed northward toward Canada, thru Arizona & Utah. In that State, we encountered our first snowstorm in April. At Logan, it started to snow shortly before the doors were opened---great wet, heavy flakes. The lot was jammed with people, and we had a capacity crowd. The complete performance was given, and by the time it was finished, the top was sagging by a good foot of snow.

"The Show Must Go On"
.....By Don Smith

-Continued from page one-

A few twisted wheel rims are all that remain of the United States, Belgium, Great Britain and other famous parade wagons, although nine small cages were saved. The 1937 Steam Calliope was completely destroyed, and entire front section of the older calliope was charred beyond repair, although the boiler and organ have now been placed in the "America" wagon, rebuilt for this purpose. The "Columbia" band wagon will again be used for Reserve Seat Tickets.

According to Dr. Partello, only forty-five minutes elapsed from discovery of the first flames until the quarters were completely razed and the screams of the trapped animals were the most dreadful experience he has ever known.

Joel Adkins told us then, that the show would go on, in the true Circus Tradition, and proof of his statement was witnessed recently in Dover, Ohio, where the rebuilt Circus performed truly "Bigger and Better than Ever!"

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Members of C.N.S. are urgently requested to forward news of their activities to Art Stensvad - Box 634 - North Platte, Nebr., for use in our "Billboard" column. Send Notices for "SPEC" to Don Smith - Box 246 - Farmington, Michigan.

MEMORIES OF COOPER BROS. RAILROAD CIRCUS...1917 . (Contd).

By Mrs. Betty Leonard.

Center poles were driven so deep into the ground that they had to be dug out, and each piece of canvas had to be unlaced and rolled over, before it could be folded and sacked. It was eleven o'clock the following day before the lot was cleared and everything loaded, and we were on our way. We then played Idaho and Montana, and entered Canada at Shelby, Montana.

Wheat hit the price of One Dollar a Bushel for the first time, in Canada, that year, and business was big. We played to huge crowds every day. At Ponoka, Alberta, Canada, Indians trekked over fifty miles, and camped a couple days waiting for the Circus. The top was filled, and we showed to the strangest audience I believe I've ever seen. Never any applause, never any laughter, as Indians always cover their mouth with their blankets, so if they laughed, you didn't know it. But we knew they must have liked the show, for every one stayed for the Concert. They are good patrons of the Circus.

We also played to huge crowds of Dukobars and Mennonites. Their dress clothes are very fancy. All the unmarried girls wear shawls over their head, with a white background. The Married ladies wear shawls with dark background. Most of their dresses are made of China silk in all the brightest shades. Vivid cerise, Kelly Green, yellow, red, pink, blue, with Aprons of white silk, edged in all colors of ribbons. In the Big Top, the girls all sit by themselves, and in all their colors, they looked like great bunches of flowers, grouped together.

We played British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatoon, and Manitoba, coming across into the United States again, at Minot, North Dakota, early in September. The show dropped South in rapid moves so as to get in on the Cotton crop. In North Dakota, we lost a number of our Band boys, including the band leader, Dick Smith, when they were called to the Colors, in the first World War. We closed in Idabel, Oklahoma, on December 8, after a most successful season, and a pleasant one.

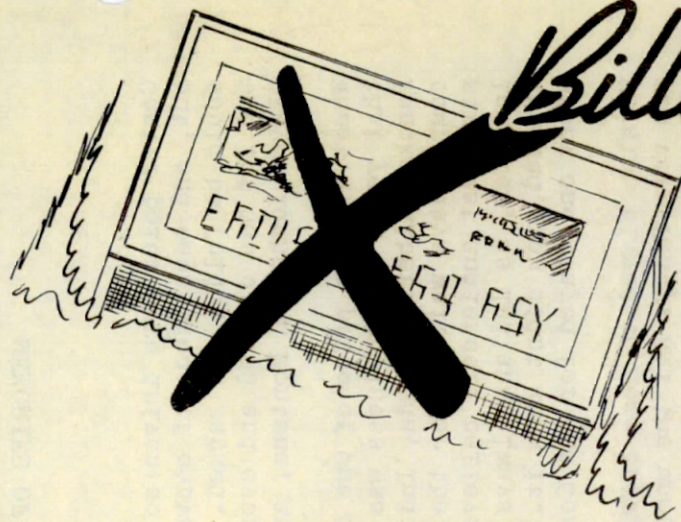
(Editor's Note. In addition to the fine article above, Mrs. Leonard has graciously included a performance photo of the E. H. Jones Circus, for each reader of SPEC, from her personal Collection. Other photos from this set may be obtained from her at a nominal charge. Show your appreciation with an order. 440 North Dodge St., Wichita, Kansas.)

NEXT ISSUE OF "SPEC" WILL CONTAIN A STORY ON "THE JOHN ROBINSON CIRCUS OF 1921", BY WALTER W. TYSON. ALSO A SPECIAL FEATURE DESCRIBING ONE OF THE FINEST MINIATURE CIRCUSES IN AMERICA, AND MORE GLOSSY ILLUSTRATIONS FOR YOUR ALBUM. DON'T MISS AN ISSUE. JOIN THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOW! FOR REAL FANS EVERYWHERE.

Wanted: "White Tops", Vol. I and II, complete. Cash or Photos in Exchange. Walter W. Tyson, 27 Green St., Guelph, Ontario, Can.



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